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## "PUTTING UP THE PEACHES"



It's home canning time again. Canned fruits and vegetables are high on the ration list and likely to stay there for some time, so, it's a good idea to dust off the pressure canner, the big tin boiler, or what have you, and put them to work with an eye to the family food supply.

Any discussion of canning brings up the subject of sugar, now seldom mentioned without the adjective "scarce," but what's more logical and economical than using your limited sugar supply -- or part of

it at least -- to conserve soundant and less-expensive varieties of fruits and vegetables rather than scarce, higher-priced ones?

In short, use part of your canning sugar to conserve our currently plentiful southern crop -- peaches.

Can Them  
At Home

1. Choose peaches that are sound, ripe, firm. Don't use any with decayed spots. Even if you cut out the spots, bacteria may lurk to spoil the rest.
2. Work with only enough for one canner load at a time. Wash fruit well. Lift out of water. Don't bruise.
3. For easy peeling, dip in boiling water about a minute or so, then dip quickly into cold water. A wire basket or cheesecloth will hold the fruit.
4. Slip off skins; take out pits. Cut in slices or halves. To keep from turning dark, drop at once into one gallon of water with two tablespoons salt, two of vinegar. Then drain.
5. If fruit is juicy, add sugar --  $1/2$  cup to each quart of uncooked peaches. Then heat to boiling and pack in its own juice.
6. For less juicy fruit -- drop into boiling sirup (see table No. 1). Heat fruit through, but don't cook until soft.
7. If you're canning without sugar -- cook fruit in its own juice. Or add just enough hot water to keep fruit from sticking to pan.
8. Meantime, heat clean jars and lids. Put hot wet rubber ring on jar, and pack peaches loosely, one at a time. Leave  $1/2$  inch head space.

9. Cover peaches with boiling liquid, still leaving 1/2 inch head space. It usually takes about 3/4 to 1 cup of liquid to each quart jar.
10. Work out air bubbles by running a knife blade down the sides of jar. Add more liquid if needed.
11. Wipe jar rim and ring with clean, damp cloth. One sticky bit can keep the jar from sealing airtight. Put on glass lid.\*
12. Push long wire bail over lid into groove. Leave the short wire up loose, work fast and put jars into canner as soon as filled.
13. When all jars are in, see that water comes over tops. Put on canner lid. When water boils hard, count time and process 20 minutes at sea level; longer at high altitudes.
14. When time's up, take out jars; quickly push the short wire down to complete seal of each jar. Protect your hands with thick cloth.
15. Set jars out to cool right side up, on thick cloth or paper. Keep them away from drafts or sudden cold. Don't cover.

\* These directions use the "lighting-type jar"--the one with the glass lid and wire bail--but any type jar can be used.

#### Stretch Your Sugar Supply

If your sugar supply is slimmer than usual, try stretching it with corn sirup or mild-flavored honey. You can replace up to 1/3 of the sugar with corn sirup, and up to 1/2 of the sugar with honey. Strong-flavored sirups, brown sugar or molasses won't work so well. You'll probably get a dark, unattractive product with a not too likeable flavor.

Sugar, you know, isn't required to keep canned fruit from spoiling. Its main job is to hold the flavor, as well as the texture and color of the fruit. But come an emergency, the wise home canner prevents fruit waste by putting up a few jars without sugar, using the peach juice from soft fruit or boiling water as the liquid to fill up the jars before processing. So sugar or not -- get a bushel or so of peaches into jars while the season is at its peak. One bushel of peaches will yield about 18 to 24 quarts.

#### Try Spreads and Pickles

Remember too, that part of your sugar allotment may be used for sweet spreads. Best bet in this category is fruit butter because the fruit pulp boils down and concentrates the natural sugar in the fruit. One pound of sugar will sweeten about three pints of peach butter.

When making jams and preserves, which ordinarily call for equal parts by weight of sugar and fruit, use 3/4 as much sugar. Under this method, one pound of sugar sweetens about 1 1/2 to 2 pints of jam.

Peach pickles are last on the list because they generally use as much sugar as spreads.

Freeze a Few  
For Future Use

If you're one of the lucky few that boasts a home freezer or access to frozen storage locker space, put a few peaches away in the food compartment for next winter. A better appetite-tickling dessert than frozen peaches hasn't been invented, and right along with the taste goes the pride of saying the peaches are straight from your own locker.

State Experiment Stations and freezer-locker managers can give you good advice on peach varieties and their adaptability to freezing. But here are a few points: One bushel of peaches allowing for discards, yields about 38 pounds of frozen fruit. Fruits keep their size and shape better in sirup than in dry sugar, and are easier to pack. Sirup for one pound of sliced peaches calls for 1/2 cup (about 1/4 pound) of sugar to 2/3 cup of water.

Dry A Few on the  
Roof or in the Oven

When you cast a speculative eye over the peach supply, don't forget the possibility of home drying. If you live in a sunny climate, a bright summer day and a tin roof are all the equipment required, or you can use the oven or a dehydrator. Whatever method you use for drying, we can truly say -- "no sugar at all is required for processing."

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Table No. 1 - Sirup for Canning (with sugar)

Sirup	Sugar (Cups)	Juice or Water (Cups)
Thin.....	1	3
Moderately thin.....	1	2
Medium (for sour fruit).....	1	1
To make sirup -- boil sugar and juice or water for five minutes. Remove scum.		



"OF COURSE I CAN!"



I'M PATRIOTIC AS CAN BE  
AND RATION POINTS WON'T  
WORRY ME!"